

EXHIBIT A

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From: U.S. EEOC <linda.li@eeoc.gov>
At: 9/18 13:15:41

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 18, 2007

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SILICON VALLEY MANUFACTURER SUED FOR
RACIAL HARASSMENT, TERMINATION
Co-Worker Rapped Racial Slurs Despite Complaints, EEOC Charges

SAN JOSE, Calif. -- A San Jose-based manufacturer of semiconductor production equipment violated federal law by racially harassing an African American assembly technician and then firing him for complaining, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit it filed today.

According to the EEOC's suit against Novellus Systems, Inc., Michael Cooke had to listen on a regular basis to a 27-year old Vietnamese American co-worker playing and rapping aloud to music lyrics that included anti-black racial

epithets. Although he complained several times to his supervisors and made it clear that the language was offensive to him, the co-worker continued to use slang involving racial slurs and to sing along to these kinds of lyrics within Cooke's earshot. The EEOC's lawsuit charges that delaying effective corrective action by more than half a year constitutes unlawful harassment, and that Cooke's termination was in retaliation for his earlier complaints.

"That kind of language pains me," said Cooke. "The N-word is not something I take lightly. It's disrespectful and demeaning and contributes to a high-strung racial environment. And to hear that language over and over, even after I asked that it stop, it's just not right. No one should have to put up with that."

Racial harassment and retaliation for complaining about it violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The EEOC filed suit (C-07-4787 RS) in U.S.

District Court for the Northern District of California) after first attempting to reach a voluntary settlement. The suit seeks back pay, compensatory and punitive damages for Cooke and appropriate injunctive relief to prevent any future discrimination.

EEOC Regional Attorney William R. Tamayo said, "The EEOC is not in the business of judging anyone's musical tastes, but we are concerned when we find that an employer failed to respond promptly after being put on notice of racially offensive language or conduct in the workplace."

EEOC District Director H. Joan Ehrlich commented, "This is the kind of situation that many Bay Area workplaces, as well as the rest of the country, face: How do you manage the culture clash across generations, race and ethnicity, you name it in a workplace that gets more diverse every day? I think it's critical to try to put yourself into the shoes of the other person and take all complaints of discrimination seriously. Together we can try to defuse tensions and prevent situations from developing into discrimination and harassment."

Ehrlich added that the EEOC welcomes employers and advocates to partner with the agency on its E-RACE Initiative (Eradicating Racism and Colorism from Employment). On February 28, 2007, EEOC Chair Naomi C. Earp launched E-RACE, a national outreach, education, and enforcement campaign focusing on new and emerging race and color issues in the 21st century workplace. Further information about the E-RACE Initiative is available on the EEOC's website at <http://www.eeoc.gov/initiatives/e-race/index.html>.

According to its web site (www.novellus.com), Novellus (NVLS) has approximately 3,300 employees, maintaining engineering & manufacturing facilities in both San Jose and Tualatin, Ore., and sales and service operations in 16 countries around the world.

The EEOC is the federal government agency responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. The San Francisco District's jurisdiction includes Northern California, Northern Nevada, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Further information about the EEOC is available on its web site at <http://www.eeoc.gov>.

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